THE

RAGGED SCHOOL UNION

MAGAZINE.

Ye have not sowed in vain!
Though the heavens seem as brass,
And piercing the crust of the burning plain,
Ye scan not a blade of grass.

Yet there is life within,
And waters of life on high;
One morn ye shall wake, and the spring's soft green
O'er the moistened fields shall lie.

Tears in the dull cold eye,
Light on the darkened brow,
The smile of peace, or the prayerful sigh,
Where the mocking smile sits now.

Went ye not forth with prayer?
Then ye went not forth in vain:
The Sower—the Son of man—was there,
And *His* was the precious grain.

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TO OUR READERS.

It is impossible to review the facts which cropped out of the Ragged School movement during the past year without expressing our gratitude to the Father of all temporal and spiritual blessings. For never, during our twenty-five years' labour amongst the destitute or outcast classes, have facts more strikingly confirmed the truth of the Divine promise, those who "sow in tears *shall* reap in joy."

Not only are Ragged Schools generally in a healthy state, but most departments have exhibited the truest evidence of real life—namely, *growth*. Hence, during the past year, the affiliated institutions have increased to 186. Nor has there been any diminution in the population reached. For the Sunday Schools are now attended by 29,511 scholars, being 3,618 more than in 1866. There has also been an increase in our day and night scholars of 1,640. When, in addition, it is stated, that no less than 1,235 operations are now conducted in our Ragged Schools, it will be seen what a mighty machinery Christian love has called into operation for the benefit of our poorer brethren.

Among the many movements in advance which marked the past year, one cannot be omitted, namely, the connection of several suburban schools within twenty-four miles of Charing Cross with the central Society. The five Ragged Schools thus affiliated have a united attendance of about 1,000 children and adults, and are well worked by the local friends.

The financial state of many schools has caused the Committee of the Ragged School Union to vote a larger amount than usual. For this purpose they did not hesitate to draw largely from the fund reserved from legacies. By such timely aid, several valuable schools have been freed from debt, and, what is of equal importance, from the deep anxiety felt by the local officials how to meet their pecuniary claims without curtailing their plans of embattling with social vice and misery.

As the only organ of Ragged Schools, it has been our aim to press on this great Home Mission, both in London and in the provinces—nay, not only in Great Britain, but throughout the wide world. For we are persuaded that Gospel machinery which, through the Divine blessing, has been found so effective in England, is equally fitted to meet the spiritual claims of those who, in distant lands, are sunk in heathenism, practical or avowed. Thus we have given our readers an insight into kindred work carried on in France, Italy, America, Egypt, India, and Madagascar. In these distant spots we gladly report that the work is carried on with that prayerful earnestness which almost *compels* success; and thus the reaper has tracked the sower like his very shadow.

In closing this year's literary labour, we cordially thank those who have aided us, either by contributions or by suggestions. Such communications—detailing authentic facts or describing new machinery—will always be regarded as welcome guests. Thus, by our united labour, we may hope to extend the kingdom of our Lord, until the glorious day dawn on a sin-stricken world, when it will be no longer needful to say, "Know the Lord, for *all* shall know him, from the least to the greatest."

1, Exeter Hall, W.C., *December* 1, 1867.

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